

# Integrating Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric in First-Year Writing

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This qualitative study examined instructors' perceptions of the role of reading in a first-year writing (FYW) course, English 101, and the ways they integrated reading and writing instruction after changes were made to the course title, description and student learning outcomes at a regional university. The changes made reading a more explicitly stated component of the course. Theories of integrated reading and writing instruction, rhetorical reading and metacognition informed the study. Findings indicate that, while more experienced FYW instructors expressed and practiced a research-supported, rhetorically-based, integrated reading/writing pedagogy, less experienced instructors did not articulate or demonstrate a developed, integrated reading/writing pedagogy. The study suggests the need for professional development for early career FYW instructors and recommends resources for promoting a rhetorically-based, integrated reading/writing pedagogy in FYW courses.*

There is a growing sense of the need to teach reading in the first-year writing (FYW) course as a means of improving student learning in college (Carillo, 2015; Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Jolliffe, 2007). Recent studies have demonstrated that student writing is often hindered by a shallow understanding of sources and have suggested that students need explicit instruction in active reading in order to construct and express their own arguments (Haller, 2010; Howard, Serviss & Rodrigue, 2010; Jamieson, 2013). The new research describing students' difficulties in transitioning to the demands of college reading and writing has spurred a renewal of the "reading movement" of the 1980s and 1990s, one that argues for increased attention to reading pedagogy in the FYW classroom (Allen, 2012; Carillo, 2015; Horning

& Kraemer, 2013; Salvatori & Donahue, 2012).

Numerous national studies continue to highlight declining reading skills among youth and adults (Horning & Kraemer, 2013). In a 2012 report, the ACT organization noted that a reading score of 21 predicts success in college, yet only 52% of test-takers met that benchmark. Reading achievement is much lower among some minority groups; for example, only 36% of Latinos and 22% of African Americans tested as college ready in reading (ACT, 2012). A study by the Pew Charitable Trust (2006) found that fewer than half of graduating college seniors scored at the proficient level on a test of prose and document literacy and one study suggested that almost half of undergraduates do not improve literacy skills after two years of

college (Arum & Roksa, 2011).

Such alarming statistics have prompted calls to activate a Reading Across the Curriculum movement similar to the Writing Across the Curriculum movement in first-year or General Education studies (Horning, 2007; Joliffe, 2007). At Appalachian Regional University (ARU, a pseudonym), where the present study was conducted, critical reading has been recommended as the focus of the new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), part of the accreditation process, that will guide pedagogy and professional development. It makes sense that all General Education faculty take responsibility for helping first-year students transition to college reading; but this is especially true for FYW instructors.

A number of recent studies have asserted that FYW students' writing benefits from direct instruction in reading. Students transitioning to college often need assistance in learning to construct meaning from texts and in using those texts to develop and express their own ideas (Carillo, 2015). Building on research that supports an integrated reading/writing pedagogy, new studies have suggested that a lack of critical reading skills hampers students' writing abilities, contributing to the likelihood of "patchwriting" (Howard, Serviss & Rodrigue, 2010, p. 178), or superficial use of sources, and plagiarizing (Bugdal & Holtz, 2014; Haller, 2010; Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Jamieson & Howard, 2013).

Reading is a central activity for most FYW courses and a main tenet of the Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014). Textbook readers are generally adopted by FYW courses, and many of these include chapters with instruction on critical reading and active reading strategies (Fleming, 2013). Yet, despite the prominence of reading in most FYW courses, research has shown that in some FYW classrooms, reading is assigned, but it is not taught (Adler-Kassner & Estrem, 2007; Helmers, 2003; Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Jamieson & Howard, 2013;

Johns, 1997; Joliffe, 2007; McCormick, 1994). In the many first-year writing courses I have observed over the past 15 years, as mentee, mentor, peer evaluator, and researcher, some instructors emphasized ideas in the readings, spending valuable class time discussing social issues or ideas in a general way, but, as Horning and Kraemer (2013) asserted, "[t]oo little time is devoted to explaining *how* to actively read an essay or *how* to transfer and assimilate the readings into effective composition" (p. 72).

It is not surprising that reading pedagogy is an under-theorized and underdeveloped aspect of FYW classrooms since most composition instructors are not trained to teach reading and most likely do not perceive themselves to be reading instructors (Bosley, 2008; Carillo, 2015; Helmers, 2003; Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Jamieson, 2013; Joliffe, 2007; Scholes, 2002). The lack of an integrated reading and writing approach reflects the historical divide which has placed them in separate disciplines, separate departments, and separate courses, a "divorce... that has been central to pedagogical tensions" since the eighteenth century (Harl, 2013, p. 30). Lack of exposure to reading theory and pedagogy means that composition instructors may not know how to address students' difficulties with reading complex texts or how to effectively integrate reading and writing instruction (Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Joliffe, 2007).

In response to these concerns, as well as to annual program assessments pointing to students' inadequate engagement with sources in their writing, FYW faculty at ARU implemented a new approach to English 101, the first in the two-course FYW sequence, which made reading a more clearly stated component of the course. In line with researchers' calls for descriptive research on how reading is taught in FYW, I studied the effect of these program changes on instructors' perceptions of the role of reading, and their approach to integrating it with writing, in English 101 (Carillo, 2015).

## Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

### Rhetorical Reading

The theory framing the FYW program at ARU falls within what Fulkerson (2005) described as a “procedural rhetoric” tradition (p. 671), which emphasizes writing for a suitable context and audience and promotes the process model of writing. Within this broad frame are variations, described by Fulkerson as “composition as argumentation, genre-based composition, and composition as introduction to an academic discourse community” (p. 671). Depending on an instructor’s orientation then, readings in the FYW course may be used as material for arguing with and against, as discourse modes to imitate, or as an invitation to join academic discourse through close reading, “interpretive argument,” and “citing textual evidence” (Fulkerson, 2005, p. 678).

The theory of reading underlying FYW program changes at ARU also focuses on a rhetorical approach and emphasizes reading as an active construction of meaning (Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick, and Peck (1990) noted this construction of rhetorical reading and writing as

strong interaction. The reading process is guided by the need to produce a text of one’s own. The reader as writer is expected to manipulate information and transform it to his or her own purposes. And the writing process is complicated by the need to shape one’s own goals in response to the ideas or even the purposes of another writer (p. 6).

Flower et al. (1990) asserted that learning to join academic conversations relies on moving beyond the “telling of one’s knowledge” (p. 4) to transforming that knowledge by understanding and responding to particular rhetorical situations. They referred to this as “reading-to-write,” (p. 4) noting that this is the “task we most associate with college level work” (p. 4) across the disciplines.

Haas and Flower (1988) defined rhetorical reading as that which goes beyond information getting to an “active attempt at constructing a rhetorical context for the text as a way of making sense of it” (p. 168). Their analysis of the reading strategies of ten college readers, both inexperienced and experienced, revealed that experienced readers who used rhetorical reading strategies to compose “representations of text as purposeful actions, arising from contexts and with intended effect” (170) were able to recognize central claims of texts, both explicit and implicit, more readily and sooner than inexperienced readers. Haas and Flower (1988) promoted direct instruction of rhetorical reading strategies to help students see their own writing as responding to rhetorical situations with appropriate purpose, voice and appeals to readers.

New studies continue to promote direct instruction of rhetorical reading as a means of improving students’ reading and writing. Sanchez & Helfeldt (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental study of the effects of direct instruction of rhetorical reading strategies on both native and English language learners in four FYW classes. The students assigned to the two treatment groups, in which rhetorical reading strategies were modeled, supported and practiced independently, showed statistically significant gains in measures of reading and writing performance. The authors promote explicit instruction in rhetorical reading strategies as a means of developing successful college readers and writers.

Katz, Brynelson and Edlund (2013) described a rhetoric-based college readiness curriculum widely implemented in California secondary schools. Grounded in Aristotelian rhetoric, the three-pronged model asks students to consider an author’s use of ethos (persona), pathos (emotional appeals) and logos (logical appeals) to persuade readers. This type of analysis helps readers see that “they are the objects of these strategies” and to see texts as “rhetorical machinery in action,” which can help students see

themselves as writers responding to particular rhetorical situations (Katz et al., 2013, p. 995). Preliminary studies of the curriculum implementation, including teacher reports, test score comparisons, and a mixed-method study have argued for the effectiveness of the model (Katz et al., 2013).

### **Integrating Reading and Writing**

The concept of rhetorical reading is based on research supporting the connection between reading and writing processes (Bazerman et al., 2005; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Tierney & Pearson, 1983; Hass & Flower, 1988; Shanahan, 2006). Reither (2000) argued that “academic writing, reading and inquiry are inseparably linked; and all three are learned not by doing any one alone, but by doing them all at the same time and that to ‘teach writing’ is thus necessarily to ground writing in reading and inquiry” (p. 291).

Tierney and Pearson (1983), describing reading and writing as “similar processes of meaning construction or composing,” identified the essential steps in both reading and writing processes as planning, drafting, aligning, revising and monitoring (p. 261). Other studies have demonstrated that building on these shared cognitive processes enhances literacy learning (Horning & Kraemer, 2013). Additionally, research has shown that writers learn to enact various discourse forms in their own writing as they read representative texts in that discourse (Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Nelson, 2008).

Helping students make stronger connections between their reading and writing by providing explicit instruction in rhetorical reading can improve literacy learning (Bean, Chappell, & Gilliam, 2014). Haller (2010) concluded that FYW students need scaffolding to learn to use academic sources in their writing and recommended explicit instruction in rhetorical source use in order to help students construct more effective academic arguments in their writing. Jamieson and Howard’s (2013) study, part of the

Citation Project, a multi-institution research project on college writing and plagiarism, revealed that students “mine sources” at the sentence level, demonstrating little understanding of text. Using citation context analysis, the researchers examined the writing of 174 students at 16 varied colleges and universities and found that “94 percent of the 1,911 citations were written from isolated sentences in the source texts” (p. 123). Jamieson and Howard (2013) labeled this copying, rather than composing, and submitted that many students may not know how to read or work with academic texts to craft their own arguments.

### **The Meta-Reader**

ARU’s attempt to more explicitly teach rhetorical reading and to more effectively integrate reading and writing is informed by what Horning (2011) described as a “metacognitive theory of expert reading” (p. 1). Based on decades of research (El-Hindi, 1997; Flavell, 1979; Pugh, Pawan, & Antommarci, 2000), Horning labels this expert the “meta-reader”: the college reader who brings a metacognitive awareness to the critical reading of lengthy informational prose “for the purpose of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application” (p. 4). As Bauer and Theado (2014) pointed out in their research synthesis of more than 60 studies, metacognitive reading strategies have been “the most frequently promoted instructional approach” for helping college students become active, engaged readers (p. 72).

Much like Haas and Flower’s (1988) experienced rhetorical reader, the meta-reader has a “meta-contextual awareness of where the text comes from and how it fits into the larger scheme of things---topic, research, author, disciplinary issues and related matters” (Horning, 2011, p. 5). Additionally, the meta-reader has a meta-linguistic awareness of the language of the text, paying particular attention to diction and syntax among other language features. Meta-readers are able to apply these expert reading skills to their own

writing as well: as they become expert readers of academic prose they develop an ear for academic prose and are able to analyze, synthesize and evaluate their own texts (Horning, 2011).

Horning's conception of the meta-reader, linked with rhetorical reading as a guiding concept, provides a foundation from which to consider what we might expect to see happening in FYW classrooms and undergirds the questions posed by this study: Did program changes making reading a more explicit component of the English 101 course affect instructors' perceptions of the role of reading, and its integration with writing, in FYW? Did the program changes affect how FYW instructors taught reading, and integrated it with writing, in English 101?

### Program Description

This study took place at Appalachian Regional University (ARU), a comprehensive, regional university on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains. Students must meet the minimum requirement of an 18 ACT English score to be placed in English 101, the first of a required two-course sequence. There is no minimum reading score for placement in the course. In fact, if a student does not meet the minimum ACT reading score of 20 for full, unqualified admission, that student could be taking a developmental reading course at the same time as English 101. ARU also uses a secondary placement assessment developed by the state council on postsecondary education when ACT scores are not available or for students who request an alternative assessment.

In 2013, fueled by ongoing concerns, based on abundant anecdotal evidence, that many students in English 101 struggled with assigned readings, and based on results of annual program assessments that indicated that two-thirds of FYW students were failing at using sources in meaningful ways in their writing, FYW faculty reviewed and revised the course title, course description and student

learning outcomes for English 101. These changes were further influenced by research reports such as the Citation Project, which showed college students "shallowly" comprehending sources and superficially integrating and synthesizing research in their writing (Jamieson & Howard, 2013, p. 117). The results of the Citation Project corroborated our program assessment findings and convinced faculty that students' writing would benefit from more explicit attention to reading in the course.

English 101, titled Composition I, was renamed Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric. The reframed course description and objectives, adopted fall semester 2013, privileged reading as well as writing and promoted the integration of the two: the change, according to program leaders, was meant to encourage instructors to teach reading, not just assign texts and discuss them. In implementing these changes, the FYW program expected that all syllabi, lesson plans, and assignments would convey an overall rhetorical awareness. The change challenged the assumption that students should know how to read when they get to college: it recognized that students need direct instruction in transitioning to college-level reading, just as they do to college-level writing, and institutionalized the reading/writing connection.

English 101 at ARU does not incorporate outside, individual research (that occurs in English 102); rather, students read common texts and practice summary, analysis, synthesis and integration and citation of these sources in their writing. For over a decade, the FYW program had used one particular textbook, an anthology of lengthy, complex, classic and contemporary readings. Instructors often complained that too much class time was required to help students understand the readings. Along with the title change of the FYW course, the program adopted a new textbook, *Language Awareness* (Eschholz, Rosa & Clark, 2013), which contains both classic and contemporary readings, but which are generally shorter and less complex than those

in the previous textbook. Program leaders believed that the reading assignments in the newly selected textbook emphasized the power and importance of language and lent themselves to discussions and writing assignments that are reflective of the rhetorically-focused student learning outcomes.

The practice of reading professionally-produced texts in the FYW classroom has been deliberated for decades, its use championed as inspiration, imitation or promotion of critical thinking essential for the development of argument (Horning & Kraemer, 2013). Others have rejected reading professionally-produced texts in favor of reading student-produced texts (Fulkerson, 2005). The Tate/Lindemann debate of the early 1990's questioned the place of literature in the FYW course; others debated the role of ideological, non-fiction texts that aimed to "liberate students from dominant discourse" (Fulkerson, 2005, p. 660). ARU faculty have also engaged in this debate. Whereas the previous textbook promoted close reading of what might be termed literature, the move to *Language Awareness* reflects Downs' and Wardle's (2007) promotion of FYW content that "explores reading and writing" and seeks to "improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically oriented to reading and writing as scholarly inquiry" (p. 552).

Reading and writing instruction is complicated, of course, by the rapidly changing nature of reading and the prominence of visual and aural texts, making it all the more critical that students can negotiate and create meaning from the onslaught of on-screen images, sounds and words. But these "new literacies" still demand strong, traditional print-based reading and writing skills (Bazerman, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2013; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Despite the unrelenting deictic nature of literacy (Leu et al., 2004), this paper is primarily concerned with print-based skills; research participants' literacy activities

examined in this study were all print-based and ARU's FYW program still employs print textbooks.

## Method

This study investigated the impact of program changes to the English 101 title, course description and course objectives on instructors' perceptions of the role of reading, and its integration with writing, in the course. I also wanted to examine how instructors taught reading and if the changes altered the way they taught reading. The goal of this study was to describe how reading was taught in FYW to help advance a theory of integrated reading, writing and rhetoric and provide insight for graduate education and professional development.

## Participants

A general email was sent to all FYW instructors at ARU asking them to participate in this study. Of the 16 full-time and 33 part-time instructors teaching English 101 fall semester, 2013, eight responded that they were willing to participate. I interviewed the eight instructors but was only able to complete classroom observations for six. At the time of the study, I was in a peer-to-peer relationship with the participants. Institutional Review Board approval of the study assured confidential and fair use of their data.

The variety in instructors' characteristics and experiences enriched the data. Two instructors have PhDs in Composition/Rhetoric and hold full-time positions---one tenured, with 30 years teaching experience; one tenure-track with ten years teaching experience. Six instructors have Master's degrees: three in English, one in English Teaching and one in Creative Writing. Of these, two instructors had only two years of experience teaching FYW at the time the data was collected and one was teaching English 101 for the first time; one instructor had 25 years of experience; and the other three had an average of eight years of teaching

experience. Two instructors were full-time lecturers, teaching five sections of FYW per semester; four instructors were part-time adjuncts, three of whom also teach FYW at other institutions. Participant characteristics have been conflated in the analysis below to ensure confidentiality.

Three participants are referred to here as more experienced instructors: the two with Ph.D.'s in Composition/Rhetoric, one tenured with 30 years of teaching experience, and one tenure-track with ten years of teaching experience. The other is a full-time lecturer who has completed doctoral course work and has 25 years of teaching experience. The other five participants are referred to as less experienced instructors.

Instructor interviews were conducted in the first half of the fall semester, 2013 (for interview protocol, see Appendix A). Classroom observations, where I took detailed notes, took place in the second half of the semester. The observation period was chosen by the instructor as one which demonstrated an integration of reading and writing instruction. Additionally, instructors provided me with syllabi and assignment handouts prior to my observations.

### **Analysis**

The eight instructor interview transcripts and six classroom observation field note sets were collated according to the interview questions and open and axial coding were used to analyze the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Categories were developed and examined for core concepts, which are discussed below.

#### **The Role of Reading in English 101**

All of the instructors commented that making reading a sanctioned part of the course title helped to clarify the purpose of the class and to distinguish it from English 102, where the focus is on developing research papers using individually selected sources. Instructors said that the changes to

English 101 helped students see that they will be engaged with foundational reading and writing and critical reading, not just writing. One instructor noted that “it’s good that we’re actually saying now, more officially, that it’s not just a writing course.”

The more experienced instructors said the changes would not affect the role of reading in the course because they already had a well-developed reading pedagogy. One instructor commented that the program is now catching up with his approach to the course, which has “always been about the relationship between reading and writing and conversation, that they are all kind of meshed together.” Another noted that “I’ve always insisted on critical reading skills...thinking about what you read and analyzing it and looking deeper at all the different parts of a text.”

The other five, less experienced instructors said that the changes caused them to emphasize reading more. One instructor, teaching English 101 for only the second time, noted that

I will definitely work on incorporating more reading, making the reading more a part of the classroom...using the course not just for the sentence dimension, like this is how you write. But really try to break it down to see how the reading works, even if it’s breaking down a particular paragraph where the author does something well or the author does something noteworthy. The changes are going to help me pay attention more to the reading. It’s really going to help me make reading more involved in the actual courses...Where before, I felt like I focused a lot on writing and the reading just became something of an add on, but I want to integrate a bit more. To use it as examples, to use it as generating ideas [and to look at how] we can apply it to express our own ideas.

For these five less experienced instructors, the course changes made them “more conscious” of the role of reading in English

101. Even one of the more experienced instructors remarked that:

We are going to talk about the content of the reading but we will be much more focused and connected to writers' language use ... finding ways to connect it to writing in general and to their writing in specific. And I have done that in bits and pieces before but my mind is much more closely focused on it now.

All of the instructors saw the role of reading in FYW as idea generation and structural modeling. The course readings provided the motivation to write: they helped students "get to talking about ideas." According to the instructors, the class would "lack energy" without the readings. The texts also served as models for students' own writing, for "seeing what the author is doing" and "what we as writers can learn from it." One instructor commented that students need to see how writings are assembled; he said, "It's like reverse engineering a piece of writing to see how the author stresses a main point, how they persuade the reader, how they use information, what kind of information they are using."

It was only the more experienced instructors who mentioned that students need to be able to retrieve evidence from texts to support their own arguments. They described helping students engage in dialogue with other writers, helping them "to think their ideas through the ideas of what they are reading" and practice "having a voice that's distinct from but uses the voices of others." One instructor said that students need to learn not just to report what other writers say but "to actually be thinkers and to express their own thoughts" by building on the ideas of others.

### How Instructors Teach Reading

**What students read.** I asked instructors to explain in more detail how they have taught reading in English 101 and if and how this was changing as a result of the course changes. Instructor comments began, in all of the interviews, with the textbook. Two of the

instructors said that they have continued to use the previous default text, one experienced instructor because he likes the complexity and sequencing of the "strong" readings and the way the textbook "tries to have pieces in dialogue with each other and that is exactly" his approach. The other six instructors generally agreed that the readings in the previous textbook were too long, "way too complex," and contained language that "is so far removed" from students' experiences and interests. Instructors worried that students were "not enthused" about the readings and "a lot of them don't get it." There were many comments on the more accessible readings of the new textbook, *Language Awareness*; for example, that it has reading selections that are "more modern" and that all show "how people are empowered by language use, how they use language and how students can empower their own college experience" through language. This reflected the FYW program's movement toward a rhetoric-based course that integrates and approaches reading and writing as academic inquiry (Downs & Wardle, 2007).

Three of the instructors were also using excerpts from Hal Herzog's book *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat*, which was the first-year book selection for the university. Instructors were keen to talk about what to read in the FYW course: the less experienced instructors especially focused on what texts were about rather than how texts made meaning.

**How reading is taught.** When asked how they taught reading in English 101, common elements of instruction included annotation, reading response questions as a precursor to class discussion, class discussion emphasizing personal connections to texts, textual analysis and rhetorical analysis. However, only the more experienced instructors could clearly describe their instructional process for teaching reading. For example, one instructor explained how she has come to teach annotation explicitly and built a process for annotation practice into the

course. Describing an exercise that she developed, she said that

[Students] literally have to write something on the annotation handout. It's not so much what they write on them but that they write on them to figure out that that's actually such a helpful skill. I mean you can't get there in any other way. If you tell them to annotate it's not going to happen; you've got to find a way to make them do it so you have to collect them and give them feedback. It's a way to get them into the discussion, so basically you are making them think about the text and over the course of the semester they get better and better with their speech and their writing because I make them go paragraph by paragraph and annotate each paragraph on that handout.

The instructor noted that at the beginning of the semester she assigned the annotation handout, a set of lined pages with space for comments on each paragraph of a reading, for every text and then less frequently and for just the more complex readings as the semester progressed. Students began to see the value of the annotation exercise as they worked to incorporate more complex readings into their own writing. The less experienced instructors did not describe a process for teaching annotation, even when prodded to elaborate on how they teach annotation, beyond mentioning that they referred students to the sample annotation in the introductory chapter of the textbook.

In describing rhetorical analysis, one less experienced instructor said that she teaches students about “the rhetorical triangle, the ethos, pathos, logos triangle” and leads discussion about who the author is, why he/she is writing, and hits “upon what the writing's about, what the author is writing in opposition to; so mostly how to find the argument, how to find the pieces so they can themselves write their own theses out of that.” Other instructors mentioned doing this type of rhetorical analysis as well, but none articulated a specific instructional process nor

did they demonstrate this in the classes I observed.

The most experienced instructor described his process for teaching rhetorical analysis clearly; for example, he said that he focuses students on the writer's purpose and the conventions the writer uses to achieve that purpose. He said,

We do close analysis of what's being said [in the assigned reading] and we talk about word choices and mechanical choices; we notice when writers are quoting others, so that they are getting that modeled for them. I try to have writers that are... judicious about their choices in grammatical structures. Like [Richard] Rodriguez using a single word, sad, you know, he says sad and puts a period. What is the effect of that ...we can unpack long sentences and talk about the use of a semi-colon or a parentheses and why is that there, what's it doing, why wasn't it conveyed with some other format? So I try to draw their focus to mechanics that they're reading as a way to help them become conscious of mechanics when they are writing.

Not surprisingly, the more experienced instructors had a more developed reading pedagogy and were better able to articulate their instructional process. Among the less experienced instructors, the use of such terms as critical reading and rhetorical analysis was vague and they were less able to describe any specifics about how to teach these types of reading. One instructor offered only improving vocabulary as his approach to teaching reading in FYW but he did not articulate how he does this.

### **How Reading Instruction Will Change**

When asked how their reading instruction has or will change as a result of the changes to the course, two of the most experienced instructors indicated that they already have a well-developed approach to teaching reading and do not anticipate changing that. However, the tenure-track instructor with a PhD in

Rhetoric and Composition, with ten years' experience teaching FYW, commented that she has never been very comfortable with the role of reading in English 101. She reflected on the danger of "getting stuck in the content" of the assigned reading and "falling down a rabbit hole with everybody just talking about their opinion about just war or advertisements [which] doesn't really help with their writing very much if we spend too much time talking about ideas."

This instructor intended to focus more carefully on the language of the texts, not just the ideas. She said that she now better recognizes her responsibility in teaching reading in English 101 and has carved out time specifically in the syllabus to focus on reading skills. She has begun to assign reading notes as classroom preparation assignments that require students to interact with the readings by summarizing main ideas, examining the language, identifying interesting sentences or passages, noting personal reactions, and developing questions that will help lead class discussion of the text. She hopes that these will

force [students] to pause when they are reading and not just take a few minutes before class to read over the text. That they'll be able to talk about it and potentially be able to contribute to the conversation. But they are going to have to think about the reading beforehand and they are going to have to be able to summarize it and respond to it and connect and question it.

Another more experienced instructor mentioned that she would offer "more specifics on reading strategies" and spoke about extending the previewing text strategies she discusses at the beginning of the semester that alert students to the usefulness of background information and textual headings to generate questions as they read. She noted that she would now more consciously "make it more of a practice of how we approach every text."

Where the more experienced instructors emphasized direct teaching of research-proven reading strategies such as summarizing, question generation, previewing, and rhetorical analysis, the less experienced instructors' common response to how reading instruction would change in light of the changes to the course was putting more emphasis on the reading or breaking the reading down; however, they were unable to specifically describe how they would teach reading and integrate it with writing.

**Integrating reading and writing.** When asked to describe how they have integrated reading and writing in English 101, and if and how this will change as a result of the changes to the course, among the more experienced instructors the common theme was to focus on the language of the text: one instructor, during my observation of her class, exhorted her students to "give me more language from the paragraph---you always have to look at the lovely language." Among the less experienced instructors, the most common response to how they integrated reading and writing was to help students connect personally with the text. Examples for each of these are described below.

The instructor with the most experience teaching FYW noted that he integrates reading and writing by "always asking students to dialogue with the writers" that they read through annotation, influenced by Bartholomae and Petrosky's (1986) ideas about "writing on the margins and making a mark on the text." It is also important to him that he value students' "incipient awareness," referring to Salvatori and Donahue's (2005) concept, teaching them that "it's ok if you don't understand what you are reading because we find out things as we write and we don't have to know everything before we start to write." This instructor had the most clearly articulated vision of the reading/writing connection, helping students to use writing to unpack ideas in the reading and to use reading to enter into academic discourse.

On the day I observed this instructor he was guiding students through a rhetorical reading of a complex excerpt from Kwame Appiah's *Experiment in Ethics* (2010). He began with a reminder of the upcoming paper assignment, a response to Appiah that required support from three other class texts, and referred students to the assignment handout. Before class, students had been asked to annotate each half-page of the essay by putting in their own words what they understood the passage to be saying and their response to that. They were also asked to make connections to their own experience and to other readings, class discussions, and student papers from the course in their annotations.

After reminding students of the paper assignment and asking them to take out their annotated texts, the instructor led this quick-paced discussion, helping students understand Appiah's (2010) purpose, thesis and rhetorical strategies:

Instructor: Who has the next paragraph?  
Monica?

Student: No, I don't understand it.

I: Anyone else?

S: He says vices are bad and should be shunned.

I: When you say, "he is saying" who is he?

S: Hursthouse.

I: It's not coming from me, says Appiah, it's coming from Hursthouse. He is telling us not what he thinks, but what the philosopher/ethicist we met in paragraph 5 thinks. Much like you, Appiah is citing experts and he is telling us what Rosalind Hursthouse has to say. Appiah is doing the kind of thing with Hursthouse that I want you to do with Appiah. I want to point out that there are, as I said the other day, there are rhetorical conventions, like citing other writers, there are also grammatical conventions: note that Appiah says Rosalind Hursthouse the first time but only uses her last name after that. That's what you should do in your papers as well when citing experts. So, we also

see how Appiah used Hursthouse to represent philosophical ideas on ethics which he puts up against other views. Who will do paragraph 7?

S: He tells us the core of Hursthouse's belief in virtue ethics.

I: Yes, and what would be the correct use of them. Ideally we describe a virtuous person then we try to act toward it---let it direct our actions...for example, what is an ideal we all agree is worth having?

S: Go to church on Sunday.

I: Yes, go back to Murdoch [Iris Murdoch, whom the class read prior to Appiah]. Sometimes it is religion where these virtues get taught and enacted but Appiah is showing us a different view from experimental psychology. OK, paragraph 8: who's got that? He does something here that we wish Murdoch had done more of.

S: He defines terms. And he says there are two crucial questions.

I: What connections does he want you to make between these two questions?

S: Ethics and morality.

I: Yes, he discusses the relationship between ethics and morality. What's the next paragraph doing?

S: Setting up the next paragraph by taking us back to Aristotle.

I: Yes, go back into the paragraph and look for the key term that Appiah wants us to understand.

S: Eudaimonia? [Student mispronounces the word].

I: This is how I say it [pronouncing eudaimonia]. So yes, what would a virtuous person do? Does that ring true? It's a theoretical question and we try to live up to that. How about the next paragraph?

In addition to practicing this deliberate analysis of ideas in the text with the students, the instructor modeled and required attention to rhetorical and mechanical conventions: he kept drawing their attention to the language of the text. He helped students see both what the

text was saying and what the text was doing as part of the larger purpose of this set of assignments, to help students construct meaning from a complex text and put it into dialogue with other's ideas, including their own. Enacting the reading-to-write model of Flower et al. (1990), he led the students paragraph by paragraph through the Appiah reading, calling on each student with pointed questions to the text which asked them to consider specific rhetorical devices, as well as specific lexical, grammatical, mechanical, and stylistic choices and how these helped Appiah achieve his purpose. With their annotated texts in front of them, students were prepared to respond. A few students said that they did not know the answer to the instructor's question; the instructor asked other students to help and they did.

Later in the lesson, the instructor also used research supported methods to help students become more metacognitive readers by modeling his own thinking while reading process through the use of think-aloud. The instructor demonstrated his meaning making process by making visible the way he asked questions, made connections among parts of this text and with other texts, summarized main ideas, and monitored his understanding as he read. He also modeled the use of a graphic organizer, drawing a T-chart on the board and asking questions to help students construct and see the contrast Appiah was setting up between "globalists" and "situationists" (p. 132)

Through these metacognitive activities, students were engaged in paying attention to an author's rhetorical strategies. This instructor clearly articulated a vision of the role of reading in the course in his syllabus: he noted that "[w]riting...has as much to do with reading as exhaling does with inhaling." He also provided instructor's advice in the syllabus for how to approach class readings so that students came prepared to talk about and work with them.

**Down the rabbit hole.** In contrast to the lesson above, there was little connection to

the language of the text described in the interviews with the less experienced instructors. One thing they did mention consistently was the need to help students make text-to-self connections, to see how this text is relevant.

Observations of their classes confirmed this as their primary approach to the reading. The two least experienced instructors started class with journal entries that asked students to respond to the assigned reading with their own personal experiences and to share this writing. In both cases, instructors enacted what their colleague referred to as "falling down the rabbit hole" where discussion (on bullying in one classroom and on the purposes of education in another) involving a minority of students and the instructor ensued for the entire class period through personal anecdotes and far-reaching tangents. There was no direct reading or writing instruction apparent in both classrooms and no reference to specific writing assignments. The reading was used to explore ideas through text-to-self connections. One instructor made a direct reference to the text only once in a 75 minute class period. The other instructor set up a small group activity asking students to find evidence from the assigned reading as evidence for responses to questions he provided. However, when the class reconvened, the discussion again wandered "down the rabbit hole," with only two direct references to the language of the text under discussion.

During the interviews, when asked to elaborate on the integration of reading and writing instruction in their classes, the less experienced instructors named the kinds of papers that they assigned, such as summary, literacy narrative, textual and rhetorical analysis, compare and contrast essays of two authors' view points, and argumentative essays which incorporated evidence from assigned texts, but I could not prod them to describe a specific instructional approach.

The more experienced instructors, as in the example above, were able to discuss how

they continually led students back to the text. One instructor, guiding students through a rhetorical analysis of an excerpt from Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, a selection from the *Language Awareness* textbook (Eschholz, Rosa, & Clark, 2013) which considered the author's purpose, persona and emotional and logical appeals, exhorted students several times during class to pay attention to the language. Her students were obviously used to this, as some had looked up unfamiliar words as they had read so that when she challenged them with questions such as, "what does Swift mean by papist?" they could respond. One student offered a definition of the word humble, noting proudly that she had looked it up. The instructor focused students on vocabulary eight times during this 50 minute class period, pushing them to understand words such as clergyman, economist, and irony. She also encouraged them to make text-to-world connections, drawing out connections to current issues such as welfare reform, abortion, and food stamp policies. Each of these was grounded in the rhetoric of Swift's text.

The more experienced instructor who assigned reading notes for homework integrated reading and writing instruction in class through small group activities and embedded mini-lessons on stylistics and grammar. For example, after asking students to identify the writer's goal in the assigned chapter from the Herzog text, he had students work collaboratively to develop a thesis on the effectiveness of the chapter. Thesis statements were critiqued by the whole class, with the instructor offering suggestions on stylistic issues such as parallelism and concision. Then students went back into groups to locate evidence for their theses in the Herzog chapter and each group reported back with specific references to the book. The instructor then led a demonstration of how to more directly connect their evidence to their thesis statements. The instructor stressed the value of this work in helping them with their next writing assignment, a rhetorical analysis

that asked for both summary and critique of a chapter of the Herzog book.

The more experienced instructors linked reading and writing in clear ways, their assignments and classroom activities treating them as inseparable counterparts, each informing the other through rhetorical analysis. While the most experienced instructor noted that he had always practiced an integrated reading/writing pedagogy, two of these instructors commented that the course changes had prodded them to teach reading more explicitly, and integrate it more deliberately with writing, in the FYW course. The less experienced instructors taught reading by discussing ideas rather than texts and by asking students to respond personally to ideas in the texts.

### **Accountability for the Reading**

Only one instructor mentioned reading assessment, noting that the course changes suggested a need to more clearly assess reading. I examined instructors' syllabi for the evaluation weight of reading assignments to see if it was clear how students would be held accountable for the reading. The less experienced instructors did not have a separate evaluation category for reading, but combined it under headings of daily work or homework and counted it on average as 10% of the grade.

Of the more experienced instructors, one assigned homework/written responses, 30% of the course grade, with participation/quizzes, 10%, and explained in the syllabus that these points were dependent on reading assigned texts before class. Another counted his classroom preparation assignments, or reading notes, 25% of the overall course grade. To receive an A in his course, the most experienced instructor required active participation that made a significant contribution to discussion of readings. While some instructors may see the writing assignments as assessment of reading ability, these more experienced instructors made reading a priority in the class by more

explicitly and heavily weighting it in their grading scales.

### Discussion

According to the less experienced instructors, the course changes brought a greater awareness of the need to teach reading as well as writing in English 101 and to integrate reading and writing instruction. This suggests that FYW programs might benefit from more directly naming reading as an important element of the course, either in the course title or more overtly in the course objectives. Participation in this study may have also raised the awareness of the need to teach reading more explicitly in English 101.

The data also demonstrate that there was little or no reading instruction in the classes of less experienced instructors and that they did not articulate a developed reading pedagogy in the interviews. Although they did mention concepts such as rhetorical reading or critical reading in the interviews, they did not demonstrate how to teach these processes. For these instructors, reading seemed to function primarily as idea generation and text-to-self connection explored through discussion. Other studies have suggested that this may be a common practice in FYW classrooms (Carillo, 2015; Jolliffe, 2007). But discussion is not instruction: as Morrow (1997) wrote, we need to be as deliberate in “cultivating reading skills as we are in developing writing ability” (p. 466). FYW instructors need to help students move from limited, personal connections to texts and help them make text-to-text and text-to-world connections, as did the more experienced instructors (Jolliffe, 2008).

The more experienced teachers employed direct methods of rhetorical reading instruction that moved students toward the meta-reader practices described by Horning (2011). They did this by using research-based methods such as the think-aloud procedure, demonstrating, requiring and working with annotations, demonstrating the use of graphic

organizers to examine text structure, encouraging a vocabulary acquisition process, practicing a question generation process, and providing direct instruction in rhetorical reading (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986 and 2014; El-Hindi, 1997, Flippo & Caverly, 2000; Nist & Holschuh, 2000; Pugh et al., 2000; Sibold, 2010; Simson & Nist, 2002). Reading instruction was integrated with writing through assignments that required summary, analysis, critique and synthesis of class texts. The more experienced instructors’ concept of the reading/writing connection went beyond idea generation to explicit attention to texts as rhetorical models. Reading as “dialogue” with other writers was also a strong theme of the more experienced instructors and their classroom activities enacted this theme.

The more experienced instructors facilitated a swiftly moving Socratic method of questioning that involved more students in the classroom and constantly moved back to the language of the text under consideration, clearly linking it to writing assignments. The less experienced instructors in this study struggled to see reading as something more than a “add on” to writing instruction and often allowed students to “wander down the rabbit hole” in unproductive and non-instructional discussions. Their inability to articulate or demonstrate a clearly developed, integrated reading/writing pedagogy is understandable, given their newness to teaching, the probable lack of exposure to reading theory and instructional practice in their graduate program curriculum, and limited professional development in the reading/writing connection (Adler-Kassner & Estrem, 2007; Carillo, 2015; Jolliffe, 2007).

### Implications for Teaching and Research

As Carillo (2015) pointed out, there is a lack of descriptive data and “professional discourse that addresses the role that reading might play ... in the first-year composition classroom” (p. 12). While this study is limited by its focus on local program changes and the small number of participants, it provides

descriptive data that reveals how reading is being taught, as well as how it is assigned and not taught in FYW.

The data suggests the need for increased professional development for early career instructors at one institution, data that may be helpful to other programs working to improve first-year students' writing. While this study does not presume causation, did not look at student outcomes related to instructional approaches, and cannot generalize based on the small data sample, theories of integrated reading and writing, rhetorical reading, and metacognition and the deep research-base that supports these instructional practices, suggest that students in classrooms where these approaches are employed are learning to be more aware of effective reading and writing practices necessary for college success.

The study contributes to the field by providing descriptions of such research based instruction in action that could serve as examples for professional development to help instructors move students toward a focus on writers' "lovely language" and rhetorical moves, not just on the ideas, of their assigned readings. As Jamieson (2013) suggested, if we want students to be able to write papers that reflect a deep understanding of and engagement with their sources, we need to develop instructional practices that teach students how to do this. This paper can serve as a base to suggest best-practices and resources for instructors who want to develop rhetorical reading and metacognitive teaching practices in FYW classrooms. For example, Carillo (2015), like Horning and Kraemer (2013), recommended teaching rhetorical reading strategies within a metacognitive framework. She described two of her own assignments, a passage-based paper (p. 132) and a reading journal (p. 135), as examples of assignments that could help inexperienced instructors practice a more deliberate, rhetorically-based reading/writing pedagogy that encourages student engagement with texts.

Bean, Chappell and Gillam (2014) provided step-by step guidance in rhetorical reading in their textbook *Reading Rhetorically*. Although written for students, it can serve as a handbook for instructors who want to implement a more integrated reading/writing approach and help students learn to "analyze not just what texts say but how they say it" (p. 3). Bean and Weimer (2011) also offer many practical suggestions for integrating reading and writing in college classrooms such as strong response assignments (p. 109), teaching students to develop their own reading-based questions, exploratory writing assignments (p. 116), variations on the double-entry notebook assignment, and creative takes on reading journal assignments.

Holding students accountable for assigned reading, or assessing reading as well as writing, was a feature of the more experienced instructors in this study and suggests the need to build reading into the assessment practices of the course. Nilson (2010) suggested many research-based activities to get students to read and engage with their reading, including creative ideas for homework assignments, quizzes, in-class written exercises and oral performances. The *Reading Apprenticeship* approach (Schoenbach & Greenleaf, 2009) is another research supported resource for college instructors who want to incorporate a more deliberate reading pedagogy in their courses through a focus on metacognitive conversations.

These resources can inform professional development offerings and self-study, but these are not enough. Many FYW instructors are graduates of master's degree programs which offer little in the way of reading theory or pedagogy. If the field of Rhetoric and Composition continues to think of reading as a separate field and neglects to include robust, integrated reading and writing pedagogy in graduate curricula, new instructors will continue to lack effective instructional practices (Carillo, 2015; Horning & Kraemer, 2013).

Salvatori and Donahue (2012) have argued that interest in the subject of reading, “after decades of apparent dormancy” in English studies, seems to be resurging (p. 199). The movement toward a more integrated approach does seem to be occurring, as more research indicates that first-year students benefit from an instructional approach that clearly links reading and writing development. Major professional organizations in the field of English studies, such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the International Literacy Association have all developed statements on the need to integrate reading and writing. In addition, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) driving P-12 curriculum development promote an integrated approach to reading and writing instruction (Holschuh, 2014).

Given the need to help many first-year students improve their writing and learning in college, renewed efforts to connect reading and writing pedagogy are promising. More research is needed to describe and demonstrate the benefits of providing direct instruction in the metacognitive, rhetorical reading strategies that academic writing demands. The more experienced instructors in this study demonstrated research based approaches for integrating reading and writing in a rhetoric based FYW course that can help inform the preparation of FYW instructors. Greater attention to reading pedagogy in the graduate education of FYW instructors and in early career professional development could help ensure that first-year students benefit from direct instruction that effectively integrates reading, writing and rhetoric.

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## Appendix A

### Instructor Interview Questions

1. What do you think of the changes to the ENG 101 course title, course description and SLO's
2. What is your understanding of the reason for the changes?
3. What impact will the new course title, course description and SLO's have on the way you approach ENG 101?
4. What textbook do you plan to use? Why?
5. What is the role of reading in your ENG 101 classroom? Will this change as a result of the new course title, course description and SLO's
6. In what ways will the new course title, course description and SLO's change the way you teach critical reading skills in ENG 101?
7. How would you say that you have been teaching reading in the composition classroom?
8. In what ways will the new course title, course description and SLO's change the way you teach writing skills in ENG 101?
9. In what ways have you integrated reading and writing in your ENG 101 classroom?
10. In what ways do you plan to integrate reading and writing assignments in your ENG 101 classroom?
11. How will you use the textbook to integrate reading and writing in your course?
12. Do you have a sample assignment you would be willing to share that demonstrates how you intergrade reading and writing in ENG 101? Could I have a copy of your syllabus?